

Health Care for African Americans in the Riley and Geary Counties of
Rural East Kansas, 1880s-1930s:
A study of the racial hardships and personal triumphs of black Kansans in
professional medicine and traditional folk healing

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Spring 2009

Introduction

When they were enslaved on plantations in the antebellum South, African Americans needed to find ways to treat themselves medically so that they could continue working as soon as possible. We can safely assume that several African Americans learned, used, and passed down knowledge of midwifery and folk medicine, including the understanding of the healing powers of prayer, herbs and other organic materials, to help treat their fellow slaves. Women were most often the main practitioners of such holistic healing, which included the psychological and sociological power of suggestion, prayer, and some contemporary medical procedures to administer to the slaves. Largely, African Americans in eastern Kansas stuck to the traditions of their ancestors that ran deep within them through time. No matter the ridicule or threat of legal action, black Kansans often found ways to mix contemporary and traditional medicine that suited their needs, despite racial barriers.

Hardships settling into Kansas were large for anyone, but it was almost especially difficult for Exodusters, freedmen moving to the “Promised Land” of Kansas after Reconstruction failed around 1879. From the sometimes harsh environment, to the population dynamic skewed in favor of the majority whites; from the socio-political atmosphere, to the lack of access to education and decent wages it is not difficult to see why many African Americans had a trying time adjusting to “Bleeding Kansas.”

Key Concepts and Persons

Some of the factors that helped African Americans in Kansas cope with the stress and rigors of moving to a new region were their deep faith in their religions, their knowledge of the healing properties of various roots, herbs and more, and their sense of community. This

especially helped ease the nerves of expectant mothers and their midwives when giving birth in the Middle-of-Nowhere-Kansas where inexpensive health facilities were scarce. Naturally, while many African Americans settled in eastern Kansas some breakthroughs in equality of medical education and overall race relations in the area allowed many of them to go to medical school, and allowed them to seek some treatment at emergency facilities and dispensaries. It is unfortunate, however, that they and other minorities were given the short end of the stick when it came to proper treatment for almost any reason. It is this give and take dynamic- sometimes equal, sometimes worlds apart- that spurred many African Americans, and even Anglo Americans, to work harder for equality in the treatment and education of African Americans in medicine.

Some of the people that worked to move past the racial barriers, whether they consciously knew it or not, were men like Dr. E. L. Patee, one of the white physicians that treated early Exodusters near Topeka around 1879; and Dr. W. H. Clarkson who, around the early 1900s, didn't seem to mind treating non-whites in Manhattan, KS. In fact the hospital was the one public area in Manhattan that blacks and whites could both go at the same time. Dr. Thomas Unthank and Dr. J. Edward Perry, amongst others, were two of the foremost active African American medical professionals campaigning for equal and inexpensive medical treatment in Kansas City. However, amidst the growing demand for more professionalized medicine for all, some in eastern Kansas remained practitioners of faith and homeopathic healing.

Religion and Family

It seems when a person has nothing else but the clothes on his back, his family by his side, and his God and he must move to some distant state, he values his family and faith even

more. It is all the more likely that he will cleave to these things with more fervor if he or someone in his family is a newly freed slave who has been forced to watch different family members sold off like chattel, unlikely to be seen again. As simple as it sounds, sometimes all it takes is the love of family and the glorious joy of faith to heal a person's body and soul. Blood relatives were not the only source of family either; Rosa Hickman of Manhattan remembers that the whole neighborhood was a family, and everyone shared responsibility in taking care of each other.¹

In a little town in Geary County, Kansas, African Americans- though only 5% of the population in 1880- were the backbone of two major churches in Junction City. The Second Missionary Baptist Church and the Ward Chapel African Methodist Episcopal Church did so well, as "present day members explained, (because) people wanted to go to the churches they had belonged to in the South."² The faith and pride of the people in their churches helped them become established as the "first two African American congregations" in the area.³

In Manhattan, Kansas, which is about 35 minutes from Junction City by today's transportation standards, the first black church was "known as the Second Methodist Episcopal Church, and was built in 1866 at the corner of Sixth and El Paso on the south side of town. The establishment of this church suggests that a number of black families lived in the vicinity of the church. Besides fulfilling the religious needs of Manhattan's black community, the churches played an important role in promoting close-knit social bonds."⁴ Since church and community

¹ Rosa Hickman, informal interview, by Maggie Henson. Manhattan Public Library, Manhattan, Ks., Nov. 7, 2008.

² Susan Lloyd Franzen. "Junction City's Early African American Churches." *Set In Stone: Stories of People and Events That Shaped Junction City and Geary County, Kansas*. Linda Barten, Gaylynn Childs, Leona Garrison, Jan Gray, Shelly Gunderson, Kathleen Harris, Mary Kay Munson, Eric Stahl. Junction City, Kansas. Printing & Publishing, Wichita, Kansas. 2008. pg 13.

³ Ibid.

⁴ Nupur Chaudhuri. "We All Seem Like Brothers and Sisters: The African-American Community in Manhattan, Kansas, 1865-1940." *Kansas History*. Winter 1991-2. *HIST 533 C, Kansas African American History*. Fall 2008. Dr. M.J. Morgan. Manhattan, KS: Claflin Copies, 2008. pg 276 & 281.

acted as the glue that helped the black families muster onward in the face of racism, it is not surprising that they looked after each other. It was “sort of like one family, we just all stuck together,” says Mrs. Hickman in Nupur Chaudhuri’s article, and Ruth Bayard adds, “we all seem like brothers and sisters, because we were around each other all the time.”⁵

The Hammond Family of Junction City, Kansas

In Junction City, there is one family that is particularly well known for their dedication to

their church and faith healing. Specifically,

however, it is only the women of the family that

manifested any perceived powers to heal with

vigilant prayers, a healing touch, and total

submission to God. The “expansive

Johnson/Hammond clan springs from Alex

Johnson, a former slave, and Pascal Hammond,

a freed black man from South Carolina.”⁶ In her

essay, Gaylynn Childs goes on to quote Susan

Franzen from a “Museum Musings” column,

published in the Daily Union on July 25, 1999,

that “The marriage of Mary Johnson and

Joseph C. Hammond in October of 1889 marks

the real beginning of the Hammond dynasty in



Figure 1. Joseph C. and Mary Johnson Hammond.

The Hammond family was well known in Junction City, Kansas for their dedication to their church and service to their community. Mary Hammond especially was renowned in Church of God congregations across the country for her gift of faith healing, though she never traveled outside the state of Kansas. Hammond descendants still live and return to Junction City to this day.

Courtesy of the Geary County Historical Society

⁵ Ibid, 277.

⁶ Gaylynn Childs. “The Hammond and Johnson Families- Up From Slavery.” *Set In Stone: Stories of People and Events That Shaped Junction City and Geary County, Kansas*. Linda Barten, Gaylynn Childs, Leona Garrison, Jan Gray, Shelly Gunderson, Kathleen Harris, Mary Kay Munson, Eric Stahl. Junction City, Kansas. Printing & Publishing, Wichita, Kansas. 2008. pg 27.

Junction City.”⁷ Figure 1, on page 4, is a photo of Joseph C. and Mary Johnson Hammond later in life.

In 1902, the Hammond family created and led a church that was more strict than most, but emphasized “forgiveness, loving, caring, Evangelism, and human rights.”⁸ Mervyn Hammond outlined his grandmother’s acquiring of the church as such: “1902 Mary Hammond, Nanny Dunlap, and Gussie (or Sussie) Sparks started a mission in a house located at 117 East 3rd Street, Junction City, Kansas.”⁹ Through this mission the Hammond women- Mary, her daughters, and daughters-in-law- healed citizens in their community with prayer and faith. It is also where Mary received her reputation as a true healer. In one anonymous account of “Mother Hammond,” the author wrote, “Many of us are here today because of her marvelous gift. Many people in the city were healed through Mary’s prayers.”¹⁰ Mervyn later recalled that even though his Grandmother never went out of Kansas, she was known in Church of God congregations everywhere: “Whenever she laid hands on people, they were healed. A lot of people here claimed they didn’t believe in the gift of healing. But when people came through Kansas, they would stop to be healed through my Grandmother.”¹¹ The women did not just heal physical ailments and injuries. Healing in terms of religion includes the reform of sinful souls. Rev. Lucy Hammond and much of the rest of the church involved in missionary work, made trips to seedy 9th street, where prostitution was practiced and alcohol was consumed illegally, in attempts to reform the alcohol vendors and the prostitutes.¹²

⁷ Ibid.

⁸ Franzen, 13.

⁹ Mervyn Hammond. “First Church of God History.” *Hammond* (manila folder). Geary County Historical Society.

¹⁰ “Mary Johnson Hammond.”⁸⁹ *HAMMOND*. The red binder. Geary County Historical Society.

¹¹ Childs, 27.

¹² Franzen, 13-14.

Medicine at the turn of the century was not always about the proper dose of liquid to drink or the next pill to take. Occasionally, a physical body could be healed when someone of such a sweet nature as Mary Hammond touched and prayed for him or her. Eric Bailey might offer his opinion that this sort of healing is “tantamount to autosuggestion or hypnotism.”¹³ While one could argue that the healing of a person with prayer and the touch of an inherently good woman is probably nothing more than mind-over-matter, one cannot argue that some home remedies for other ailments have some merit. For centuries before mass produced and regulated prescription medications, people had to consult homeopathic masters- or sometimes women who knew their way around a garden- for natural cures to all that ailed them.

Homeopathic Solutions

In slavery and on the long treks out from the south, African Americans had to deal with various illnesses and injuries without the help of proper medicines and medical equipment. Often, however, that was a preferred method of care for them. Although there were physicians that practiced homeopathy as a specialty (Figure 2, on page 7, shows the medical license of two such physicians that actually practiced in Manhattan found at Riley County Historical Society), the expense of seeing a doctor, and a general distrust and aversion to the negative feelings of many white citizens often subverted any desire to seek professional care. More to the point, the hospitals- often the only public institutions that were not segregated- and the doctors, some of which only saw black patients after hours, were all located far from where the main population of black citizens lived. A fact as true now as it was then, it is very difficult to travel far when ill or hurt. As a result, African Americans often used what they could grow in their yards to treat themselves. From centuries of fixing crippling injuries at the hands of slave overseers, to

¹³ Eric J Bailey. *African American Alternative Medicine: Using Alternative Medicine to Prevent and Control Chronic Diseases*. Westport, CT: Greenwood Publishing Group, Inc, 2002. pg 53.

common rheumatism; body aches from working so hard for so little, to cataracts, African Americans have learned and passed down solutions through the generations.

Record of Physicians' Certificates				
Official Record.	Date Certificate Issued.	NAMES OF PHYSICIANS.	RESIDENCE AND POSTOFFICE.	MANNER OF PRACTICE.
A.	#1165.	<p>State of Kansas.</p> <p>Certificate of Authority to Practice Medicine and Surgery.</p> <p>This Certifies, That Avery C. Hancock, M.D. aged 53 years, a native of Indiana, having furnished satisfactory evidence that he is a Graduate in Medicine and Surgery, and has received a lawful Diploma from the Kansas City Homeopathic Medical College in the State of Missouri, in the year 1896, the Kansas State Board of Medical Registration and Examination, under the provisions of Chapter 254 of the Session Laws of Kansas for 1901, hereby authorizes him to practice Medicine and Surgery in the State of Kansas.</p> <p>Given under our hands and the seal of the Kansas State Board of Medical Registration and Examination, at Topeka, this 22nd day of August, in the year 1901.</p> <p>L. F. Johnston, M.D. President. S. W. Williston, M.D. E. B. Packer, M.D. O. F. Lewis, M.D. F. O. Hatfield, M.D. D. O. Cook, M.D.</p> <p>Attest: H. W. Roby, M.D. Secretary.</p>		
A.	#1164.	<p>State of Kansas.</p> <p>Certificate of Authority to Practice Medicine and Surgery.</p> <p>This Certifies, That Mary Belle Hancock, M.D. aged 39 years, a native of Iowa, having furnished satisfactory evidence that she is a Graduate in Medicine and Surgery, and has received a lawful Diploma from the Kansas City Homeopathic Medical College in the State of Missouri, in the year 1896, the Kansas State Board of Medical Registration and Examination, under the provisions of Chapter 254 of the Session Laws of Kansas for 1901, hereby authorizes her to practice Medicine and Surgery in the State of Kansas.</p> <p>Given under our hands and the seal of the Kansas State Board of Medical Registration and Examination, at Topeka, this 22nd day of August, in the year 1901.</p> <p>L. F. Johnston, M.D. President. S. W. Williston, M.D. E. B. Packer, M.D. O. F. Lewis, M.D. F. O. Hatfield, M.D. D. O. Cook, M.D.</p> <p>Attest: H. W. Roby, M.D. Secretary.</p>		

Figure 2. Record of Physicians' Certificates: Hancocks, homeopathic physicians.

According to the Riley County Historical Society's records of directories for Riley County in 1900, Dr. Avery C. Hancock and Dr. Mary Belle Hancock practiced homeopathic medicine in Manhattan, Kansas, with at least one other homeopathic physician, Dr. Ross.

Courtesy of the Riley County Historical Society

Herbs, Roots, and Other Materials

Karen Scroggins, “Ms. Karen,” is a current senior resident of Junction City, Kansas. To the author, she wrote down several homemade remedies for things like warts, bug bites, and pain. Interestingly, many of the solutions include vinegar, water, and/or garlic. Indeed, the different uses of vinegar seem to be similar to the use of Windex as a cure-all in the film *My Big Fat Greek Wedding*.

Some of Ms. Karen’s simple recipes include:

Warts: Put warm castor oil on some gauze and apply to the wart/ 3 weeks it will be gone. Or, put vinegar on wart and cover with baking soda

Wounds: Whole wheat flour mixed with 1 egg yolk, honey and turpentine. Put on sore.

Liniment for sore muscles, sore joints: 6 eggs beaten; ½ Cup of turpentine; 1Tbsp oil; 2 Tbsp peppermint oil; milk.

Worms: Eat a clove of garlic

Snake bite: Slice onion and hold on bite, turn in 10 or 15 minutes (it will turn green), put on another slice.

Eating a lot of garlic and onions helps prevent gall stone and kidney stones. Garlic will also increase fertility.

Sore throat: take equal parts of honey, vinegar and lemon. Gargle or drink slowly.

Tick Bites: A few tsp of charcoal from wood and enough water to make it stay on thin. When it becomes dry change.

Bee stings: put wet tobacco or baking soda on it.

Ear ache: Place a drop of warmed vinegar in it. Or, wrap onion slices in foil, heat until juicy, put a drop of the juice in the ear.

Eye: If something is in the eye, use a drop of milk to get it out. And for cataracts mix half of honey and vinegar, and drop it in the eyes.

Fever: Bathe child in warm vinegar and water. May add a little dry mustard

Corns and Bunions: Bandage feet overnight with a slice of raw onion and old bread wetted down with lots of vinegar

Frostbite: Tbsp oil, Tbsp turpentine, Tbsp of ammonia, mix and put in bottle. Put small amount on area and rub well.

Heat rash: Brown some flour and put on rash. Or, put vinegar in bath water and some baking soda can be put on rash.

Hiccups: Eat tsp of peanut butter

Arthritis: Chop 2 cloves of raw garlic and leave it set for 5 minutes in a cup of warmed olive oil. Fill the toe of a sock with the mixture and rub over the affected area for several minutes. And/or, one teaspoon of vinegar and 1 teaspoon of honey in a glass of water (presumably to be drunk) four times a day.

Sore knees: 2 lbs of Epsom salt, 1 dozen lemons cut up. 1 Tablespoon of cream of tartar. Put in a gallon jar; fill with luke-warm water. Let stand a few days- shake well. Take 2 Tbsp a couple times a day.¹⁴

It also appears that some treatments differ from family to family and county to county. For instance, Mrs. Hickman, in Manhattan, told a story of an older gentleman who had “dropsy-” a type of swelling in the legs. The older women of the neighborhood, tried to treat him with hot mullein herb tea, and wrapped his legs with clean towels, dipped in hot water night after night, the idea being to sweat the aches and pains out. Though it was not a cure and it did not actually help mobility much, if at all, it did in fact help ease some of the pain. It’s much different than Ms. Karen’s cures for aches and



Figure 3. Black Owned Grocery Store on Yuma.

It is likely, that because this store was located within the “black neighborhood” the residents shopped here to buy what they couldn’t produce themselves.

Submitted by James Butler. *Manhattan in the 20th Century: A Pictorial Collection*. pg 22.

¹⁴ Karen S. Scroggins written correspondence to Maggie Henson, ‘author’. 4 June- 12 June, 2009.

pains, to be sure.

Mrs. Hickman also spoke about how everything they ever needed they grew or raised themselves such as vegetables, pigs, and chickens. What they couldn't grow themselves they used every bit of it when they had to buy it. Because it was somewhat unsafe for black residents to travel north of Colorado Street, it is likely that any items to be bought were purchased at grocery stores within the "black neighborhood" where they were probably better priced than in town. Figure 3, on page 9, is an example of one of these stores that was once on Yuma.

When one of the few pigs they owned was slaughtered, the African Americans considered it wasteful to throw away any part of it without trying to use it for something. The hoof, for example, would be used to help a child stop his or her bed wetting; they just boiled the hoof in the coffee pot and had the child drink it like tea. For the "coup," something that seems to be an "older folks" type of cold, goose grease with cayenne pepper rubbed on the chest is said to have the similar effects as Vicks VapoRub. There were even simple home made ways to disinfect the family, or at least that is what they thought they were doing. Mrs. Hickman's family, when she was a young girl, would collect boiling hot water from the reservoir of their potbelly stove, and mix it with cold lamp oil, and all the children would take a bath in that, to get "clean and disinfected."¹⁵

Geraldine Baker Walton is the author of *140 Years of Soul: A History of African-Americans in Manhattan, Kansas, 1865-2005*, and even her family in Manhattan, the Bakers, had their own solutions. In an email she sent to the author, she wrote:

Colds were treated with rubbing menthol on our chest and putting menthol in a pan of hot water, sticking it under a towel to help clear the chest and stuffy nose. We also had to take cod liver oil, that was the worse tasting stuff that you ever wanted to take.

¹⁵ Hickman, informal interview, Nov. 7, 2008.

When we got cuts we usually treated them at home washing them out and putting bacon grease, lard or Vaseline to help it heal. I remember one of my brothers climbing on a water pump that had a sharp edge at the top, he fell and his under arm got cut. My mom used soot from the stove to stop the bleeding, it healed alright. I remember when we got shots for diseases it was at the school.¹⁶

The Hammonds also had their own medicinal family recipes. Some of the ones listed in the Hammond family files at the Geary County Historical Society include recipes for good children and a happy family, and some of the ingredients include love and faith. However, one particular “real” recipe is for soap. Figure 4, on page 12, is a recipe called “Grandma’s Lye Soap,” found in the archives at Geary County Historical Society.

Reasons for Folk Healing

There are a few reasons for why black Kansans preferred caring for themselves within their own communities; segregation, racism, distrust, and financial instability were the primary factors. Eastern Kansas being so close to Missouri where slavery had been legal, and where much of the bloodshed to decide Kansas’ slave status occurred, was just as deeply involved in the Jim Crow laws and prejudice against free African Americans as in the Deep South. In Manhattan, segregation confined the African American community to the southern part of the city. Chaudhuri explains that “no apparent reason for the move towards the south side has been found in any contemporary documents, but some of those interviewed had their own thoughts on the subject.

¹⁶ Geraldine Baker Walton. "Folk Healing." E-mail to Maggie Henson, 'author'. Apr. 13, 2009.

GRANDMA'S LYE SOAP**Ingredients:**

1 qt. of water
2½ cups of grease- lard, bacon greas, fat back.
½ cup of ammonia
1 can of lye
4 T. of boroax powder

DIRECTIONS:

Dissolve lye in water (hot water) let mixture cool for 2 hours.

Add melted grease stir a few minutes, add the borax and ammonia. Stir until, the thickness of honey.

Pour into a pan or box.

When set, cut into squares.

THIS SOAP WAS USED WHEN SCRUB BOARDS WERE AROUND, AND YOU HUNG OUT YOUR WASH. Bluing, liquid was used to whiten your clothing.

For the modern use for this soap, you must grate it into a fine powder.

This soap can be kept for years.

Figure 4. Grandma's Lye Soap.

The Hammonds of Junction City, Kansas, had their own personal recipe for laundry soap. Then, as now, recipes to cure illness, heal wounds, and even make soap are as varied from family to family and county to county as recipes for homemade food.

Courtesy Geary County Historical Society

Mrs. Dorothy Elaine Brown Fulghem noted that segregation of Manhattan developed later in the 1880s; some blacks had in fact settled on the north side of town, but because a larger number of them settled in the south side, after a while the white population seemed to prevent them from living anywhere else in Manhattan. Ruth Bayard remarked, ‘(Whites) just wanted blacks south of Poyntz [Avenue], kind of like a little settlement.’”¹⁷ The location of the “settlement” was also several blocks south of where the different locations of the hospitals had been over time, where

the pharmacies were located, and where doctors who actually treated blacks practiced.

There were only a few doctors in Manhattan from the Exodus to the turn of the century who treated African American patients. Mrs. Hickman’s father’s favorite doctor in Manhattan was Dr. W.H. Clarkson, physician and surgeon. Figure 5, is a photo of Dr. Clarkson from an article titled “These Men Make Manhattan People Healthy,” in the Industrial Edition of the *Manhattan Daily Mercury* from August 1913. Also, Dr. E.L. Patee “volunteered the service of free medical treatment for sick refugees and even extended the offer to furnish the needed medicine without charge, if no offer of relief came from



W. H. CLARKSON, M. D.
Physician and Surgeon

Figure 5. These Men Make Manhattan People Healthy. Dr. W. H. Clarkson was one of the few doctors in Manhattan, Kansas who treated African Americans, and was willing to accept various goods instead of monetary payments.

Courtesy of the Riley County Historical Society

¹⁷ Chaudhuri, 276.

local druggists.”¹⁸ There was also a Dr. L. J. Lyman who “would treat the African Americans.”¹⁹ Two doctors Mrs. Walton remembers going to while growing up that “blacks could go to and get good, kind care were Dr. J. F. Basom and Dr. Schwartz.”²⁰ A Dr. Stillman also reportedly took African American patients, and was also “the only doctor in the area who would treat Indians.”²¹ In lists of Manhattan Professionals at the Riley County Historical Society, a Dr. W.M. Coleman was referred to as the “colored physician” and was located at the east end of Pottawatomie Avenue in 1895.²² There is no indication as to if this physician was himself black, though Pottawatomie was the southern most street that was considered to enclose the black neighborhood. Even then, some doctors, such as the one dentist who agreed to see them, only saw black patients after hours, most likely in order to segregate them from white patients.²³

In Manhattan “all public places except the hospitals were segregated,” and was likely the case in much of the rest of eastern Kansas as well.²⁴ However, throughout Manhattan’s history, the hospitals were not very close for blacks to be able to get to very easily from their designated area on the south side of town. More to the point, not one was built in the direct vicinity of the black neighborhood between 10th and 3rd Streets, and Pottawatomie and Colorado Streets. Each hospital, even with the best of intentions for helping the poor black citizens, was built north of Poyntz, where they faced racial stigma.

Location, access, and social variables were not the only factors that discouraged African Americans from seeking professional care. In general, they could not afford the fees that were required to pay for treatment. Mrs. Walton explained “We never saw a dentist unless the tooth

¹⁸ Ibid, 275.

¹⁹ Walton, E-mail, Apr. 13, 2009.

²⁰ Ibid.

²¹ Lowell Jack. *A History of Manhattan, Kansas*. Manhattan: Hawley Printing, 2003. pg. 40.

²² “List of Doctors from approximately 1870-1928.” Manhattan Professionals- Doctors folder. Riley County Historical Society. Ten pages.

²³ Walton, E-mail, Apr. 13, 2009.

²⁴ Chaudhuri, 279.

was ready to be pulled. We didn't go to the doctor too often because we couldn't afford it, when we did go it was the last resort.”²⁵ When she was pregnant, Mrs. Hickman had just such a last resort situation. Unfortunately, she had some complications during the delivery of her one and only child, a daughter, Elaine Valree. She needed to go to the hospital, and luckily for her, the hospital that once was on Fremont and 11th Street, had recently been taken over by Catholic nuns, just seven years before the birth of her child. Though it was quite a difficult horse and buggy ride from their home to the south of Manhattan, with the charitable help from the sisters there, Mrs. Hickman delivered her daughter safely, and was made to stay in bed for ten days in a private room for which she and her husband only paid \$85 total.²⁶

However, when someone couldn't pay the fees, bartering often came into play. Whether for food, furniture, or other goods, some rural doctors accepted gifts from their patients instead of money. Clearly, Dr. Clarkson was a very generous doctor, as he once accepted a chicken from Mrs. Hickman's father as payment for a house call.²⁷ Dr. Stillman also accepted goods instead of monetary payment. It would seem that, “being very poor, the Indians would attempt to pay him with Indian horses which he would accept on occasion so as not to injure their pride.”²⁸ It is likely that he extended the courtesy of bartering to his black patients as well. Included in the fee was probably the cost of patent medications, or medicines that the physician or drugstores mixed personally.

Considering the threat that many “patents” posed to public health, it would appear that the home remedies that seem useless to today's generation, were no more harmful or less successful than these miracle cures.

²⁵ Walton, E-mail, Apr. 13, 2009.

²⁶ Hickman, informal interview, Nov. 7, 2008.

²⁷ Ibid.

²⁸ Jack, 40-41.

“In 1906, the year in which the first federal Food and Drug Act was passed, a Congressional committee estimated that there were approximately 50,000 patent medicines being made and sold in the United States. In the days of unregulated marketing, these products often posed threats to people’s health as well as to their pocketbooks. Some contained dangerous ingredients such as opiates and cocaine, and even those that were harmless may have kept patients from seeking proper medical treatment with the false hope of a cure.”²⁹

Advertisements for patent mixtures such as “Snake Oil” as shown in Figure 6, on page 17, were just the sort of thing that got people to waste their money and time. African Americans, if they wanted a quick solution to avoid the doctor, and if they felt their own remedies did not work, might have been duped into buying patent meds. Mrs. Hickman recalled that her father’s favorite doctor, Dr. W. H. Clarkson, curiously, prescribed only one pill for every patient to take for everything that ailed him or her.³⁰ Though Mrs. Hickman could not remember the name of the pill, it is almost certain that it would have been a form of patent medication. Other than this and homeopathic folk medicine, any vaccinations that were required, for children at least, were given at their schools.

²⁹ John Parascandola. "Patent Medicines and the Public's Health." *Public Health Reports* (1974-). Vol. 114, No. 4. July-Aug 1999. pg 319

³⁰ Rosa Hickman informal interview by Maggie Henson, ‘author’. Manhattan Public Library, Manhattan, KS. 07 Nov. 2008.

pg 4 Column 4
 AN NATIONALIST FRIDAY, MARCH 21, 1919

Acid and Stomach

acid. Brings instant relief from indigestion, heartburn, sour belching, food repeating, bloating and gas and makes the stomach cool, pure, sweet and comfortable.

Dentists warn us against the bad effects of acid mouth, pointing out that the acid eats through the enamel of the teeth, causing them to decay. You can easily imagine then the amount of damage excess acid will cause to the delicate organization of the stomach!

Thousands of people are using EATONIC and the results obtained are so remarkable as to be almost unbelievable. Yet their letters of gratitude, many of which are received daily, prove absolutely that EATONIC does all and even more than we claim. The medical profession, too, recognizes the great value of this wonderful remedy. A learned Michigan doctor wrote recently: "I have had such wonderful success with EATONIC that I want every one to know how quickly it will neutralize the acidity of the stomach (acid-stomach) and the stomach will soon be sweet and normal again, and the sick man well and happy once more."

So be sure to get a big box of EATONIC from your druggist today. If it fails in any way to give you the kind of satisfaction you want, take it back—he will refund your money. He doesn't want one penny of your money unless EATONIC helps you.

EATONIC TODAY

FOR ACID-STOMACH

CRUELTY KILLS CHILD

Sick Baby Put Outside Because Breathing Disturbed Parent

Fargo, March 20.—The tragic death of a second child in the McDonnell family as a result of inhuman treatment by the father, Dan McDonnell, is told in a confession which Mrs. McDonnell, mother, is said to have made Monday evening.

DAILY HEALTH TALKS

Better be Careful About Your Kidneys

BY N. B. COOK, M. D.

Food taken into the stomach goes through various chemical changes, and some of these changes are poisons that must be sifted out and disposed of. It is the duty of the kidneys to do this. When the kidneys do not fully perform their vital work, death may be only a few hours away.

to Mrs. Jessie Schofield, a Fargo nurse, who was placed in charge of the prisoner and who told her story here today.

McDonnell and his wife are in jail at Jamestown charged with murdering their 12-year-old daughter Etta, at their home near Courthouse last Friday.

About two years ago, according to the story Mrs. McDonnell is said to have told Mrs. Schofield, their 2-year-old child became ill with the measles and later pneumonia developed. One night during the child's illness it was breathing very heavily and angered McDonnell. Mrs. McDonnell says her husband ordered her to place the child outside the house, but that she refused. McDonnell then got up, according to the story, placed the child outdoors in the cold, locked the door and went back to bed, threatening to kill Mrs. McDonnell and the children if she returned the child to the room.

Mrs. McDonnell claims she brought the child into the house after it had been exposed to the cold for more than an hour. The following day the child died.

Man Killed By Explosion

Yates Center, March 20.—A nitroglycerine wagon exploded here today blowing an unknown man to atoms. His home was probably in Neodesha. It is thought he was coming to Yates Center to shoot an oil well. Officers here are trying to find out his name.

Mrs. James White of Oketo, Kan., left for Delphos, Kan. She has been visiting at the home of Mrs. T. W. Ellis, 224 Fremont street.

BARGAINS in REAL ESTATE

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PHONE

Miller's Antiseptic Oil, Known

Snake Oil

Positively Relieves Pain in Few Minutes

Try it right now for Rheumatism Neuralgia, Lumbago, sore, stiff and swollen joints, pain in the head, back and limbs, corns, bunions, etc. After one application pain usually disappears as if by magic.

A new remedy used internally and externally for Coughs, Colds, Croup, Sore Throat, Diphtheria and Tonsillitis.

This Oil is conceded to be the most penetrating remedy known. Its prompt and immediate effect in relieving pain is due to the fact that it penetrates to the affected parts at once. As an illustration, pour ten drops on the thickest piece of sole leather and it will penetrate this substance through and through in three minutes.

Accept no substitute. This great oil is Miller's only. Every bottle guaranteed.—30c, 60c, and \$1.00 a bottle at leading druggists.—Palace Drug Co. mwif

Mr. and Mrs. George Forester of Westmoreland are in Manhattan for a few days' visit.

Read the Nationalist.

45,000 Orphans

in New York City as the result of recent influenza epidemic. Don't neglect a cold. Conquer it immediately with

Zerbst's Grip Capsules

Wonderfully effective for colds and coughs, feverish condition, aching bones. Have a box handy always. 25c at All Druggists or direct from Zerbst Pharmaceutical Co., Dept. 11, St. Joseph, Mo.

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CHIROPRACTOR

Consultations and Spinal

Figure 6. Snake Oil.

In this March 1919 edition of the *Manhattan Daily Nationalist*, there is an advertisement for Snake Oil, 13 years after the first federal Food and Drug Act that set preliminary parameters on patented medications. Today "Snake oil" is used as a derogatory term to refer to compounds offered as medicine that are believed to be fake or ineffective.

Courtesy of Kansas State University's Hale Library

The advertisements in Figure 6 proclaim that the Snake Oil liniment “positively relieves pain in few minutes, for Rheumatism, Neuralgia, Lumbago, sore, stiff and swollen joints, pain in the head, back and limbs, corns, bunions, etc. After one application pain usually disappears as if by magic.”³¹ It is no hocus pocus however, that immediately beneath it is an advertisement using scare tactics to sell “Zerbst’s Grip Capsules.” Bold type likely proclaiming the death of “45,000 Orphans in New York City as the result of recent Influenza Epidemic,” was the advertiser’s way of taking advantage of the Spanish Flu global pandemic that lasted from March 1918 to June 1920, and took more lives than any other pandemic in history, including the Black Death.

Epidemics

As it was everywhere else in the United States and the world, Kansas saw its fair share of epidemics. Eastern Kansas was no stranger to the epidemics that affected so many lives in a time when research for preventative measures, vaccines, and inoculations were barely getting off the ground. Today, we know that confined areas- such as military camps and large family homes- and ease of transportation, such as the railroads, accelerate diseases nationally and globally instead of just regionally.³² The spread of disease from larger centers to smaller ones along travel routes (such as the Santa Fe Railroad that went through Manhattan and other rural areas such as Broughton, Kansas) is called “hierarchical diffusion.”³³ Some of the larger epidemics to devastate Kansas were scarlet fever, “cholera, tuberculosis, diphtheria, smallpox, malaria, and typhoid fever. Manhattan had typhoid epidemics in 1859, 1860, and 1914.”³⁴ Interestingly, it is believed that the scarlet fever affected more whites than blacks, or so it would appear from

³¹ “Snake Oil.” *The Manhattan Daily Nationalist*. March 21. 1919, pg. 4, column 4. Microfiche. Kansas State University, Hale Library.

³² Veronika Novoselova. “Common Illness or Dreadful Disease? Scarlet Fever in Broughton, Clay County, Kansas, 1907-1918.”

³³ R. Wallace and K. McCarthy. “The unstable public health ecology of the New York Metropolitan Region: implications for accelerated national spread of emerging infection.” *Environment and Planning*. Vol. 39, 2007.

³⁴ Jack, 40.

public records. Because scarlet fever originates as a red rash on the skin, many think that African Americans' darker skin "made it difficult to diagnose the rash."³⁵ It is possible that a great deal more African Americans died of this disease and others at this time, because of the lack of proper care. Of all of the diseases that shook Kansas, a global pandemic spread in the late 19-teens during World War I, and it was called the "Spanish Influenza."

The Spanish Flu strain was considered one of the more devastating medical happenings in known history. The pandemic erupted in the middle of World War I, and lasted from March 1918 to June 1920, spreading even to the Arctic and remote Pacific islands. It is estimated that anywhere from 20 to 40 million people were killed worldwide. In the United States, the first observed case was at Fort Riley, Kansas, at that time known as Camp Funston. It was an unusual strain, because most victims were healthy young adults between 20 and 40, not the elderly or children or others with previously compromised immune systems.³⁶

The flu did however, become one of the driving forces that got African American women into the military as nurses and helped them in their civilian careers. The general explanation as to why black nurses were not in the military on



Figure 7. World War I Black Nurses at Camp Sherman, IL.

Though it took a war and a global pandemic to get the ball rolling, by June 1918, African American graduate nurses were finally being admitted into the national service.

Courtesy of the U.S. Army Center of Military History. Mary Elizabeth Carnegie. The Path We Tread: Blacks In Nursing, 1854-1984.

³⁵ Novoselova.

³⁶ Molly Billings. "The 1918 Influenza Pandemic." June 1997. <http://virus.stanford.edu/uda/>

a regular basis is that there were no separate “colored” lodgings for them. However, the numbers of active white medical personnel began to drop due to contracting the flu, which necessitated the recruitment of graduate nursing students of all colors in order to treat the thousands of patients that crammed into the hospitals.³⁷ Figure 7, on page 19, is a group photo of some of those nurses.

Solutions

Despite the short-comings of the lack of knowledge about how diseases are spread, public health officials nevertheless developed quarantine measures and laws that they believed would help to at least slow the spread of contagious diseases. For example “Pest houses were established. As in most towns such places where they took people with these terrible diseases were built out away from town.”³⁸ As for mandatory quarantines, often people were stuck in their homes with a notice out front saying that there was a contagious person in that house.³⁹ Reports of smallpox cases in Riley County, in 1911 may have caused the “County Commissioners to close the Contagion Hospital and order the County Health Officer to quarantine the cases where he found them.”⁴⁰ For people, like the black residents of eastern Kansas, who valued family and community so highly, being quarantined away from each other, unable to help, and fearful of spreading disease to loved ones, must have been a depressing and terrifying experience.

Apart from quarantines, other well known preventatives for stopping the spread of disease were the popular campaigns lead by Dr. Samuel Crumbine. Among them was the “Don’t Spit on the Sidewalk” slogan, which was later printed on bricks like the one in Figure 8.

³⁷ Mary Elizabeth Carnegie, *The Path We Tread: Blacks In Nursing, 1854-1984*. J.B. Lippincott Company, Philadelphia. 1986.

³⁸ Jack, 40.

³⁹ Rosa Hickman informal interview, Nov. 7, 2008.

⁴⁰ Jack, 43.



Figure 8. Don't Spit on the Sidewalk Brick.

This brick, with one of Dr. Samuel J. Crumbine's famous slogans, was meant to remind people to not spit in order to prevent the spread of tuberculosis.

Courtesy of the Kansas State Historical Society

“Secretary for the Kansas State Board of Health for 20 years, Dr. Crumbine's public health crusade argued for pure food and drugs, elimination of houseflies and rats, water and sewage sanitary control, and the prevention of tuberculosis. He succeeded in abolishing the common drinking cup, the common or ‘roller’ towel, and spitting in public places. Crumbine promoted these campaigns with simple and easy to remember slogans, such as ‘Bat the Rat,’ and ‘Swat the Fly.’”⁴¹

Other codes include the restriction of a certain number of people in a given closed area at any time. Figure 9, shows an enlargement of a newspaper wedding announcement of sorts that exemplifies this. There was also a law that limited funerals to 15 minutes or less.⁴² The spread of epidemics and the laws that followed them were certainly frightening in the Influenza years. However, another life crisis that could be fatal and emotionally draining to those involved was child birth and midwifery.

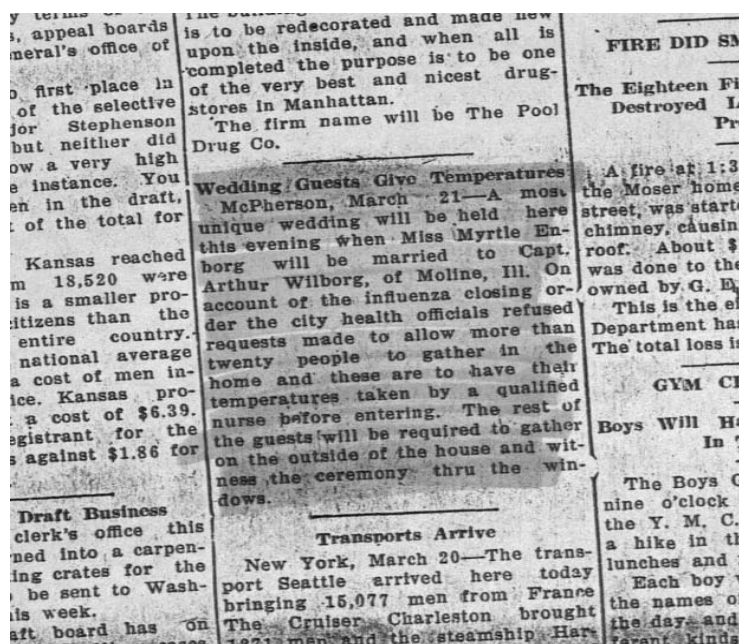


Figure 9. Wedding Guests Give Temperatures.

In this small wedding announcement, evidence of measures made to try to prevent the spread of the deadly Spanish Influenza.

Courtesy of the Riley County Historical Society

⁴¹ “Don’t Spit on the Sidewalk Brick.” *Cool Things*. Kansas State Historical Society. 2009.

<http://www.kshs.org/cool2/brick.htm>

⁴² Billings.

Midwifery

Midwives were essential to early African American women in Kansas precisely because of the limited number of doctors that would see them, and the distance of hospitals from the black neighborhoods. Often, though midwives were required to be registered with the state of Kansas, the women who attended to those that were in labor had absolutely no professional training or license. This ideal continues the fact that because African Americans were on their own in the world of medicine, they passed down age old, tried and true knowledge from generation to generation. Two women that were well known in the black communities for their midwifery skills were Dorothy Elaine Fulgham and Addie Swaggerty.

Mr. Fulgham was a well known resident in Manhattan's black neighborhood. Her knowledge of the town and how the African Americans lived there was one of the reasons author Chaudhuri interviewed her. She was also one of the most well known midwives in the black community of Manhattan. It is not clear if she was registered, though it is likely she was not, but regardless she helped to deliver several of the children in the neighborhood. In fact, though Mrs. Walton was the youngest of her family and she was the only one born in a hospital, recalled being told that Mrs. Fulgham was the woman who delivered several of her brothers and sisters, as well as many other of her friends and extended family.⁴³

In an article praising her long life of 102 years, Mrs. Swaggerty was praised for the services she provided in Eskridge, Kansas. She was not a Manhattan resident, but her story is all too common amongst black Kansans nonetheless. In Mission Creek County, she served as an unregistered midwife for a time, and worked with Dr. C.W. Walker, Dr. J.C. Bennett, and Dr. Franklin C. Stewart after finally becoming a registered practical nurse.⁴⁴ Her combination of

⁴³ Walton, E-mail, Apr. 13, 2009.

⁴⁴ Dorothy Hoobler. "She's a Yankee Doodle Dandy." *The Eskridge Independent*. July 21, 1977.

contemporary skills and traditional know-how made her one of the best midwives or nurses in Eskridge. Although her location in rural Kansas may have made official medical education difficult to obtain, and indeed, it was for all African Americans in the United States, Mrs. Swaggerty's efforts still serve as a testament to the drive that made many work harder to become medical professionals.

African American Medical Professionals

Up until August 8, 1938, the University Of Kansas Board Of Regents refused to allow black students to enter the medical school, even if they were qualified and received an undergraduate degree from the University of Kansas. Donald Ferguson was a prime example of this discrimination. An example of a reason given by the dean of the medical college, Dr. Harry R. Wuhl, for denying Mr. Ferguson admittance, was that the young aspiring doctor might have feelings of wanting to treat black patients as well as white patients.⁴⁵ Because of the prejudices and racism, black medical school hopefuls, those who wished to be doctors *and* nurses, were instructed to go to Howard University in Washington, D.C. to get their degrees. This effectively hindered the possible population of black medical professionals in the Midwest in general, let alone in Manhattan. They either had to migrate to Kansas from eastern universities with the credentials already in hand, or find a way to afford leaving Kansas in order to go to Howard University. Further, though they may have been more accepted by the African American community with their similar values, patients for these men and women may have been scarce. As previously stated, black doctors and nurses were not allowed to practice alongside whites, or treat white patients; black patients often did not want to or could not leave their communities to find a hospital.

⁴⁵ Nancy J. Hulston 1996. "Our Schools Must Be Open to All Classes of Citizens': The Desegregation of the University of Kansas School of Medicine, 1938." *Kansas History* 19, no. 2: 88-97. *America: History & Life*, pg. 97.

Conclusion

African Americans in Kansas found ways to treat themselves regardless of the prejudices against them. Whether by faith healing, herbs and roots, cheap patent medicines, kind white doctors, driven black doctors, and home grown midwives, black Kansans have always maintained a type of resilience and survival instinct that has never failed them. Even in the face of epidemic disease, poverty, and bigotry African Americans in Kansas have worked to persevere and make their own way. To be sure, this is just a simple and brief history of the medical care of black Kansans. There is much more information out there to discuss medical treatment of African Americans in Kansas, the problem is that it is not as well documented as it could be. The author is certain that more still needs to be found for Manhattan and Junction City let alone the entire state of Kansas. All it takes is for the next researcher to be angry enough that the rest of this rich history is not written down, and sooner or later he or she will hit historical gold.

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